

Corporation for National and Community Service

2010 Social Innovation Fund

The Edna McConnell Clark Foundation

Reviewer Comments – Phase 1

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2010 Social Innovation Fund

The Edna McConnell Clark Foundation

Section 1 – Reviewer Comments: Group 1

SOCIAL INNOVATION FUND 2010 PANEL CONSENSUS FORM

PROGRAM DESIGN (45%)

The Social Innovation Fund Notice of Funding Availability (NOFA) states that the following will be considered when reviewing an applicant's Program Design.

A. GOALS AND OBJECTIVES

The Corporation asks applicants to use a thematic approach in describing their proposed investments in community organizations. As established in the Act, there are two basic operational models of SIF intermediaries. The first is a SIF that will operate in a single geographic location, and address one or more priority issues within that location. This model is referred to as a "geographically-based SIF." The second model is a SIF that will address a single priority issue area in multiple geographic locations. This model is referred to as an "issue-based SIF." The Corporation will assess whether the application properly proposes goals and objectives as either a geographically-based or an issue-based SIF.

i. **Geographically-Based SIF**

To apply as a geographically-based SIF, the applicant must propose to focus on serving low-income communities within a specific local geographic area, and propose to focus on improving measurable outcomes related to one or more of the following priority issue areas:

- **Economic Opportunity** – Increasing economic opportunities for economically disadvantaged individuals;
- **Youth Development and School Support** – Preparing America's youth for success in school, active citizenship, productive work, and healthy and safe lives;
- **Healthy Futures** – Promoting healthy lifestyles and reducing the risk factors that can lead to illness.

The application must provide 1) statistics on the needs related to the issue area(s) within the specific local geographic area, and 2) information on the specific measurable outcomes related to those issue areas that the applicant will seek to improve.

ii. **Issue-Based SIF**

To apply as an issue-based SIF, the application must propose to focus on addressing one of the following priority issue areas within multiple low-income communities:

- **Economic Opportunity** – Increasing economic opportunities for economically disadvantaged individuals;
- **Youth Development and School Support** – Preparing America's youth for success in school, active citizenship, productive work, and healthy and safe lives;
- **Healthy Futures** – Promoting healthy lifestyles and reducing the risk factors that can lead to illness.

The application must provide 1) statistics on the needs related to the issue area within the geographic areas likely to be served, including statistics demonstrating that those geographic areas have a high need in the priority issue area, and 2) information on the specific measurable outcomes related to the priority issue area that the applicant will seek to improve.

B. USE OF EVIDENCE

- i. *Applicants must include in their application information describing their track record of using rigorous evidence, data, and evaluation tools to:*
- *Select and invest in subgrantees;*
 - *Support and monitor the replication and expansion of subgrantees; and*
 - *Achieve measurable outcomes.*

C. COMMUNITY RESOURCES

Not applicable. The applicant's Community Resources should be assessed in the Cost-Effectiveness and Budget Adequacy section. Applicants were instructed **not** to provide information in this section. If applicants include information in this section, it should not be considered in your overall rating for the Program Design section.

D. DESCRIPTION OF ACTIVITIES

- i. **Subgranting**
- a. *Applicants must describe the process by which they will competitively select their nonprofit community organization subgrantees, and, if applicable, the process by which they have pre-selected some subgrantees. Specifically, applicants must describe how their competitive subgrant selection process will ensure a portfolio of subgrantees that are innovative nonprofit community organizations serving low-income communities and that possess:*
- *A strong theory of change;*
 - *Strong leadership and financial and management systems, including data management;*
 - *A strong financial position, including funding diversity, the ability to meet the requirements for providing dollar-for-dollar matching funds, and the ability to sustain the initiative after the subgrant period concludes;*
 - *Strong community relationships;*
 - *A commitment to and track record of using data and evaluation for performance and program improvement;*
 - *Evidence of effectiveness, including a demonstrated track record of achieving specific measurable outcomes related to the measurable outcomes for the intermediary;*
 - *Strong potential for replication or expansion;*
 - *A well-defined plan for achieving specific measurable outcomes connected to the measurable outcomes for the intermediary, evaluation of program effectiveness, performance improvement, and replication or expansion; and*
 - *A commitment to use grant funds to replicate, expand, or support their programs.*

Either as part of its review of the applications or in clarification reviews prior to award, the Corporation may request additional information regarding pre-selected subgrantees for compliance and appropriate outcomes.

ii. **Technical Assistance and Support**

- a. *Applicants must include in their application information describing how they will provide technical assistance and support (other than financial support) that will increase the ability of subgrantees to achieve their measurable outcomes, including replication or expansion. Replication or expansion may happen in various ways (including, for example, creating new sites or affiliating with another program to replicate an intervention) and in multiple contexts (including, for example, serving more people in a current geography or growing to new geographies).*

Provide a panel assessment of the application's PROGRAM DESIGN as follows:

- **Write a brief Narrative Assessment;**
- **List the Significant Strengths and Weaknesses (annotate your comments by referencing the applicable Eligibility or Application Review Criteria); and**
- **Select a Rating for this section.**

Panel Narrative Assessment

This is an excellent program design in an excellent application. Most remarkable in the program design section is the applicant's long-term dedication to evidence. The depth of evaluation they undertake is a standout factor.

Significant Strengths

(A.ii.) EMCF has designed a high-impact SIF project that will nurture evidence-based programs to help some of the nation's most economically disadvantaged youth. (p.4) Their proposal outlines a clear need in each of the geographic areas where they propose to work, citing a variety of well-documented statistics to support their choices. Building on this need, the project has created a clear case for their unique approach and identified the requisite local funding streams to broaden the reach and impact of their SIF. Further, we were impressed with the extent to which the program design supports organizations coming to scale.

(B.i.) EMCF's partnership with MDRC is quite strong and their pioneering use of random assignment research is a strength that is clearly being leveraged in the proposal. MDRC's use of "evidence audits" also appears to be an excellent tool for determining a sub-grantees' readiness to engage in more rigorous evaluation research. We were particularly taken with the applicant's commitment to evidence use as a regular practice, and their willingness and ability to share the results of that evidence, and their knowledge of best practices, with the broader field. Finally, the evidence is directly linked back to indicators that will show whether or not they are improving quality of life for young people.

(D.i.) The applicant's six evaluation criteria for selecting sub-grantees, combined with hundreds of hours of vetting and interviewing, represents an incredibly thorough approach to identifying high-impact sub-grantees. The design then helps those sub-grantees find suitable local sources of long-term funding to help keep them going. Further, the process really will draw out organizations "poised for significant growth," and those that have "achieved demonstrated or proven effectiveness."

Significant Weaknesses

We found no significant weaknesses in this portion of the proposal.

Excellent Strong Satisfactory Weak/Non-responsive

ORGANIZATIONAL CAPACITY (35%)

The **Social Innovation Fund NOFA** states that the following will be considered when reviewing an applicant's Organizational Capacity.

A. ABILITY TO PROVIDE PROGRAM OVERSIGHT

In evaluating your organization's ability to provide program oversight, the Corporation will consider:

- i. *The extent to which your organization has a sound structure including:*
 - *The ability to provide sound programmatic oversight, including:*
 - *Experience with and capacity for evaluation; and*
 - *Experience with and capacity for supporting replication or expansion.*
 - *Well-defined roles for your Board of directors, administrators, and staff;*
 - *A well-designed plan and systems for organizational (as opposed to subgrantee) self-assessment and continuous improvement; and*
 - *The ability to provide and/or secure effective technical assistance.*

- ii. *Whether your organization has a sound record of accomplishment, including the extent to which you:*
 - *Have a track record of supporting organizations that demonstrate evidence of impact;*
 - *Demonstrate leadership within the organization and strong relationships within the communities served;*
 - *Have a track-record of raising substantial resources, and, if you are an existing Federal grantee, having secured the matching resources as required in your prior grant awards; and*
 - *The extent to which your community support recurs, increases in scope or amount, and is more diverse, as evidenced by:*
 - *Collaborations that include a diverse spectrum of community stakeholders;*
 - *A broad base of financial support, including local financial and in-kind contributions; and*
 - *Supporters who represent a wide range of community stakeholders.*

B. ABILITY TO PROVIDE FISCAL OVERSIGHT

Entities eligible to apply for SIF grants include:

- *Existing grantmaking institutions, or*
 - *Partnerships between an existing grantmaking institution and another grantmaking institution, a State Commission, or the chief executive officer of a unit of general local government*
- i. *Existing grantmaking institutions are organizations in existence at the time of the application where, investing in nonprofit community organizations or programs is an essential (rather than*

collateral) means of fulfilling their mission and vision. In keeping with this view, grantmaking institutions will generally have the following as part of their core operating functions:

- *Conducting open or otherwise competitive programs to award grants to or make investments in a diverse portfolio of nonprofit community organizations;*
 - *Negotiating specific grant requirements with nonprofit community organizations; and*
 - *Overseeing and monitoring the performance of grantees.*
- ii. *In evaluating your organization's ability to provide fiscal oversight, the Corporation will take into account its review of your organization's capacity. The Corporation will further consider:*
- *The extent to which your organization, or proposed partnership, has key personnel with the knowledge, skills, abilities, and experience to provide fiscal oversight of subgrantees; and*
 - *Whether your organization, or proposed partnership, has specific experience in providing fiscal oversight of subgrantees of Federal funds.*
-

Panel Narrative Assessment

The applicant demonstrates exceptional experience nearly bullet by bullet in this portion of the proposal. They show outstanding organizational capacity to manage and develop subgrantees for growth and impact. Of particular note was the fact that the applicant had managed to reinvent its own giving practices in the last ten years as a result of internal evaluations. It also stood out that the subgrantees would benefit in general from an association with this applicant, even above what the applicant could do directly for the subgrantees through the SIF. We see the potential for greater leverage of a SIF investment than described directly in the application.

Significant Strengths

(A.i.) The applicant focuses heavily on scale and capacity building. All of their investment decisions and program monitoring is based on data, observation and careful evaluation. They have clearly defined roles and responsibilities for their board, staff and evaluation committee, and list a compelling amount of bench strength and experience with the team. EMCF is looking to help subgrantees grow and expand their impact with a focus on providing support from co-investor to raise 50 to 70% of capital growth needs. Further, EMCF is not just building up the knowledge base to scale the idea, they help build up the organization so that the grantee is capable of growing as an organization across all business dimensions. Finally, the technical assistance partnership with the Bridgespan Group, coupled with the evidence of technical assistance impact in the applicant's previous work, provides a convincing case that the applicant will add genuine value in improving and helping to scale subgrantee operations.

(A.ii.) The applicant has already invested in programs that are not only locally successful but have warranted national focus and interest widely and broadly across societal ills, such as the Harlem Children's Zone. In addition, the applicant has been a pioneer when it comes to designing evidence-based approaches to its philanthropy and they describe 10 longitudinal, RCT, and experimental studies that they have supported, funded, and assisted.

(B.i.) The track record of demonstrated oversight in large sums of money is only enhanced by the applicant's ability to "augment" investments for co-investors.

(B.ii.) The applicant's portfolio managers have quarterly reporting against milestones signaling an early indicator system for fiscal management that builds confidence in the applicant's oversight.

Significant Weaknesses

Lack of experience with Federal funds gave us pause, but did not rise to a level of significant concern.

Excellent Strong Satisfactory Weak/Non-responsive

COST EFFECTIVENESS AND BUDGET ADEQUACY (20%)

The **Social Innovation Fund NOFA** states that the following will be considered when reviewing an applicant's Cost-Effectiveness and Budget Adequacy.

A. BUDGET AND PROGRAM DESIGN

In evaluating the cost effectiveness and budget adequacy of your proposed program, the Corporation will consider:

- i. *Whether your program is cost-effective based on:*
 - *The extent to which your program demonstrates diverse, non-Federal resources for program implementation and sustainability;*
 - *The extent to which you are proposing to provide more than the minimum required share of the costs of your program; and*
 - *Whether the reasonable and necessary costs of your program or project are higher because you are proposing to serve areas that are significantly philanthropically underserved.*
- ii. *Whether your budget is adequate to support your program design.*

B. MATCH SOURCES

- i. *At the time of submission of the application, applicants must demonstrate either cash-on-hand or commitments (or a combination thereof) toward meeting 50 percent their first year matching funds, based on the amount of Federal grant funds applied for.*
- ii. *In addition to the match eligibility criteria, the Corporation will evaluate the extent to which you have a combination of cash-on-hand or commitments to meet the full match requirements, and whether your organization will be able to provide financial resources for your SIF program beyond the minimum required match.*

Panel Narrative Assessment

The quality of this portion of the application is completely consistent with the other sections. What particularly stood out was the potential of multiple leverage points for the SIF dollars. The applicant already has the matching funding and is thinking beyond that to the next stage of activity. They also demonstrate a very strong track record of bringing in new money for their programs. The potential for subgrantee self-sufficiency beyond this program is high.

Significant Strengths

Applicant Name: Edna McConnell Clark Foundation
Application ID#: 10SI115503

(A.) Beyond its direct experience in managing \$220 million in (87) grants over the past ten years, the applicant uses an Investment Management Plan and Grants Compliance Checklist for each of its sub-grantees. The applicant proposes more than \$2 million to support its strategic planning and business plan development/refreshment with its sub-grantees.

(B.) One cannot miss the fact that the applicant has plenty of cash on hand, with no difficulty meeting the match and with evidence that it will raise significant dollars to support subgrantees further down the road. Indeed, the applicant already has secured future year funding of over \$17 million. That is above the match the applicant has committed and \$3 million dedicated to technical assistance. Finally, while the applicant has developed relationships with a wide variety of interested funding partners, it is carefully conditioning partnership on a successful roll-out of the SIF project.

Significant Weaknesses

While we would have liked to see greater diversity in the applicant's non-federal dollars, we found no significant weaknesses in this portion of the proposal.

Excellent Strong Satisfactory Weak/Non-responsive

OVERALL APPRAISAL

I. Provide a 3 - 5 sentence Overall Appraisal Statement of the application taking into consideration:

Ultimately, the key themes of excellence in this proposal were track record and leverage. The applicant's grantmaking history, coupled with its outstanding commitment to data, evaluation and sharing of best practices and its demonstrated ability to leave its grantees stronger, bigger and higher quality than they were before represented a track record particularly attractive for this undertaking. Further, their ability to not only provide the match, but also invest as much as they will (\$3 million) in technical assistance, while already planning for funding strategies for sub-grantees at the end of three years represents undeniable leverage of the SIF money. Grantees seem to be better off just for being associated with the applicant, and the details of their approach, evaluation and management met or exceeded the requirements of the NOFA on every front.

II. Select one Band for this application (double-click in the applicable box and select "checked") Ensure that your selection is supported by your panel's Narrative Assessments, significant strengths and weaknesses, Ratings, and Overall Appraisal Statement. Take into consideration the weighting of each category.

- Band I (Excellent):** A comprehensive and thorough application of excellent merit with very significant strengths and no/minimal significant weaknesses.
- Band II (Strong):** An application that demonstrates overall competence and is worthy of support, where the value of the significant strengths outweigh the identified weaknesses.
- Band III (Satisfactory):** An application with potential, where strengths and weaknesses are approximately equal. However, some fundamental weaknesses have been identified.

Applicant Name: Edna McConnell Clark Foundation
Application ID#: 10SI115503

- Band IV (Weak/Non-Responsive):** An application with very significant weaknesses and no/minimal significant strengths that have been identified. This option may also include an application that is non-responsive to the published criteria.

Rank

As a panel, Rank this application in relation to the other applications on your panel. Complete this section only after all applications before your panel have been reviewed and consensus has been achieved on each one. The highest rank is "1".

Rank: 1 of 7 total applications on Panel # 6.

CONSENSUS RUBRIC

Please use this Consensus Rubric as guidance when selecting your Ratings or Bands.

BAND I (Excellent) — *A BAND I rating reflects that the application is compelling, consistently excellent in quality, and addresses all requirements; thereby showing the highest potential for success.*

The **Excellent** application consistently:

- ✓ Goes beyond what was requested, showing that the applicant has anticipated issues that may arise.
- ✓ Provides a thorough, detailed response to all of the information requested.
- ✓ Provides a clear and highly compelling description of how the proposed activities will achieve the anticipated results.
- ✓ Provides clear evidence to support all objectives of this section (no assumptions are made).
- ✓ Supports ideas and objectives with comprehensive plans explaining and connecting ideas to objectives.

BAND II (Strong) — *A BAND II rating reflects that the application is solid, good-quality, and has great potential for success.*

The **Strong** application:

- ✓ Provides a response to all of the information requested.
- ✓ Provides a realistic description of how the proposed activities will achieve the anticipated results.
- ✓ Explains most assumptions and reasons.
- ✓ Supports ideas with comprehensive plans, examples, or outlines.

BAND III (Satisfactory) — *A BAND III rating reflects that the application generally meets requirements for a reasonable chance of success, but is neither especially strong nor especially weak.*

The **Satisfactory** application:

- ✓ Covers most of the information requested, with a few exceptions.
- ✓ Is sometimes unclear how the proposed activities will achieve the anticipated results.
- ✓ Makes some assumptions and leaves some reasons unexplained.
- ✓ Supports individual ideas with plans, examples, or outline.

BAND IV (Weak/Non-responsive) — *A weak/non-responsive rating reflects that the application is below standard especially in ability, skill, or quality; indicating that this application will most likely not succeed as described or is not responsive to the application requirements.*

The **Weak/Non-responsive** application:

- ✓ Does not provide one or more key pieces of requested information.
- ✓ Gives an unclear description of how the proposed activities will achieve the anticipated results.
- ✓ Gives many unsupported assumptions and reasons with little or no connection to objectives.
- ✓ Tends to “parrot” back the question, rather than answer and explain it
- ✓ Makes many assumptions and many reasons are not defined.
- ✓ Did not connect the activities to the anticipated results.
- ✓ Does not address or respond to the requirements/conditions of the NOFA.
- ✓ Proposes activities that are not consistent with the NOFA and application instructions.

2010 Social Innovation Fund

The Edna McConnell Clark Foundation

Section 2 – Reviewer Comments: Group 2

PANEL 10 EXPERT REVIEW
SOCIAL INNOVATION FUND 2010
PANEL CONSENSUS FORM

Instructions throughout this form are indicated in red.

Before you begin, please fill out the Applicant Name and Application ID# in the above header. This Panel Consensus Form (PCF) is where each panel records its consensus assessment of an application. The completion of this form may be led by any panelist; that individual will be designated the Lead Reviewer (LR). All Expert Reviewers are expected to serve as the LR on at least one application. The consensus assessment should be based on the panel's examination of the full application Narrative, which consists of the following 3 categories:

Category	Percentage	Subcategories
Program Design	45%	A. Goals and Objectives
		B. Use of Evidence
		C. Community Resources
		D. Description of Activities i. Subgranting ii. Technical Assistance and Support
Organizational Capacity	35%	A. Ability to Provide Program Oversight
		B. Ability to Provide Fiscal Oversight
Cost-Effectiveness and Budget Adequacy	20%	A. Budget and Program Design
		B. Match Sources

Panels will utilize Panel Consensus Calls to discuss each application and come to agreement on the content of the Narrative Assessment for each category, the Rating for each category, the Overall Appraisal Statement and the Band in which the application will be placed. When completing this form, the LR should rely on four primary documents: 1) the application being reviewed; 2) the IRW Compilation for the application being reviewed (compiled prior to discussion by the panel Facilitator); 3) the SIF Notice of Federal Funds Availability (NOFA); 4) the Consensus Rubric at the end of this form.

Please complete the following steps:

1. For each of the 3 categories (Program Design; Organizational Capacity; Cost-Effectiveness and Budget Adequacy), the LR should:
 - a. **Write a 3 – 5 sentence Narrative Assessment** reflecting the panel's assessment of the quality of the response in the category being assessed; it is important that this narrative is not a summary of the application, rather the panel's evaluation of the application's quality.
 - b. **List the application's significant strengths and weaknesses and annotate each.** Each significant strength or weakness **must** be supported by **at least one** of the Eligibility or Application Review Criteria that were in the SIF NOFA. (examples are included in this form)
 - c. **Taking into consideration** both the Narrative Assessment and the listed strengths and weaknesses, **select a Rating** by checking the appropriate box.
2. **Complete the Overall Appraisal section.** In this section, you will:
 - a. Provide an Overall Appraisal Statement; and
 - b. Select a consensus Band that represents the quality of the application as a whole. The Bands are described in the Overall Appraisal section at the end of this form, and Appendix D of the Review Guide.

3. After the panel has discussed all applications, provide a Rank for each application.

PROGRAM DESIGN (45%)

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A. GOALS AND OBJECTIVES

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The application must provide 1) statistics on the needs related to the issue area within the geographic areas likely to be served, including statistics demonstrating that those geographic

areas have a high need in the priority issue area, and 2) information on the specific measurable outcomes related to the priority issue area that the applicant will seek to improve.

B. USE OF EVIDENCE

- i. *Applicants must include in their application information describing their track record of using rigorous evidence, data, and evaluation tools to:*
- *Select and invest in subgrantees;*
 - *Support and monitor the replication and expansion of subgrantees; and*
 - *Achieve measurable outcomes.*

C. COMMUNITY RESOURCES

Not applicable. The applicant's Community Resources should be assessed in the Cost-Effectiveness and Budget Adequacy section. Applicants were instructed **not** to provide information in this section. If applicants include information in this section, it should not be considered in your overall rating for the Program Design section.

D. DESCRIPTION OF ACTIVITIES

- i. **Subgranting**
- a. *Applicants must describe the process by which they will competitively select their nonprofit community organization subgrantees, and, if applicable, the process by which they have pre-selected some subgrantees. Specifically, applicants must describe how their competitive subgrant selection process will ensure a portfolio of subgrantees that are innovative nonprofit community organizations serving low-income communities and that possess:*
- *A strong theory of change;*
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 - *A strong financial position, including funding diversity, the ability to meet the requirements for providing dollar-for-dollar matching funds, and the ability to sustain the initiative after the subgrant period concludes;*
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 - *A commitment to and track record of using data and evaluation for performance and program improvement;*
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Provide a panel assessment of the application's PROGRAM DESIGN as follows:

- **Write a brief Narrative Assessment;**
- **List the Significant Strengths and Weaknesses (annotate your comments by referencing the applicable Eligibility or Application Review Criteria); and**
- **Select a Rating for this section.**

Panel Narrative Assessment

The program design of EMCF's issue-based proposal derives considerable strength from its data driven selection and evaluation processes, as well as its exceptional record of developing close support relationships with each of its subgrantees. The Foundation evidences its deep commitment to investing in transformative social programs for young people aged 9-24 through investments in its grant recipients, allocating substantial financial, technical, and human resources to each of its beneficiaries. However, the proposal provides very few causal statistics when discussing the efficacy of its programs as they scale, and makes an unsubstantiated leap in choosing four seemingly arbitrary states as potential SIF funding recipients.

Significant Strengths

Evidence-based programming: The applicant provided great detail (page 18-19) on how it assesses its candidates, including its thorough review of the subgrantees' theories of change, empirical evidence of its impact on youth, leadership structure, and self-evaluation. This clearly demonstrates that the \$220 million EMCF has invested over its lifetime (p. 24) underwent systematic due-diligence screening. *(Program Design B.i.)*

Clear Return On Investment (ROI) metrics: EMCF identifies three concrete and measurable outcomes (p. 5): improve educational skills and academic achievement; prepare for the world of work; avoid high risk behaviors such as drug abuse, criminal activity, and teen pregnancy. This level of specificity shows the degree to which it holds itself and its grantees accountable for the success of its programs, an important criterion for the continued success of a SIF grant. *(Program Design A.ii)*

Multiple issue targets: While all of the issue areas the applicant identifies are subsumed under the Youth Development SIF category, the programs EMCF targets are diverse – from juvenile recidivism to academic performance, employment readiness to teen pregnancy. This demonstrates both its awareness of the interdisciplinary nature of the challenges economically disadvantaged youth face, as well as its compatibility with one of SIF's stated innovation metrics, that is, its ability to "address more than one critical social challenge concurrently" (p. 1, SIF NOFA). *(Program Design A.ii)*

Knowledge creation: EMCF references numerous studies, papers, and evaluations it helped produce (p. 26-27), as well as its policy of disseminating best practice case studies, such as those of the Center for Employment Opportunities, Harlem Children's Zone, and the Nurse-Family Partnership, all of which experienced significant growth and budget effectiveness during their tenure as EMCF grantees (p. 20-21). *(Program Design D.ii.a.)*

Co-investment strategy: EMCF's strategy of co-investing in programs with local funders such as Kaiser and Kellogg (p.34) speaks to its fundraising prowess, its ability to scale resources, and its resonance with the SIF matching mandate. *(Program Design D.ii.a.)*

Significant Weaknesses

In the first instance (p.9), the applicant cites the Center for Employment Opportunities, one of the four grantees it chose to highlight, as having "nearly doubled the population it serves" as a key result of an EMCF grant. It then cites corollary statistic indicating a reduced rate of recidivism for its clients without explaining the causality. It says nothing about whether they have found employment—presumably the Center's central mission—and further implies that only one-third of the clients fall in the range of what both SIF and EMCF define as youth. *(Program Design B.i.)*

The proposal features growth statistics for several of its grantees (p. 20-21), both in increases in beneficiaries and budgets, without indicating whether or not the scaling had a positive or negative effect on the quality of the programs. As such, the data they present confounds growth with impact. *(Program Design B.i.)*

The narrative neglected to provide compelling evidence as to why it selected Oklahoma, South Carolina, North Carolina, and California as the geographic areas likely to be served. Instead, the proposal relies on broader national statistics such as the nation-wide dropout rate and insinuates that the proposed geographic locations may be based on financial commitments from large corporate foundations such as Bank of American and the WalMart Foundation, rather than community needs borne out by statistics. *(Program Design A.ii.)*

Excluding the general national statistics it cites (p. 6), the applicant relies solely on reports and RCTs it helped produced (often in collaboration with MRDC), rather than presenting data from a wider variety of sources. *(Program Design A.ii.)*

Select a Rating for PROGRAM DESIGN (double-click in the applicable box and select "checked")

Excellent

Strong

Satisfactory

Weak/Non-responsive

ORGANIZATIONAL CAPACITY (35%)

The **Social Innovation Fund NOFA** states that the following will be considered when reviewing an applicant's Organizational Capacity.

A. ABILITY TO PROVIDE PROGRAM OVERSIGHT

In evaluating your organization's ability to provide program oversight, the Corporation will consider:

- i. *The extent to which your organization has a sound structure including:*
 - *The ability to provide sound programmatic oversight, including:*
 - *Experience with and capacity for evaluation; and*
 - *Experience with and capacity for supporting replication or expansion.*
 - *Well-defined roles for your Board of directors, administrators, and staff;*
 - *A well-designed plan and systems for organizational (as opposed to subgrantee) self-assessment and continuous improvement; and*
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- ii. *Whether your organization has a sound record of accomplishment, including the extent to which you:*
 - *Have a track record of supporting organizations that demonstrate evidence of impact;*
 - *Demonstrate leadership within the organization and strong relationships within the communities served;*
 - *Have a track-record of raising substantial resources, and, if you are an existing Federal grantee, having secured the matching resources as required in your prior grant awards; and*
 - *The extent to which your community support recurs, increases in scope or amount, and is more diverse, as evidenced by:*
 - *Collaborations that include a diverse spectrum of community stakeholders;*
 - *A broad base of financial support, including local financial and in-kind contributions; and*
 - *Supporters who represent a wide range of community stakeholders.*

B. ABILITY TO PROVIDE FISCAL OVERSIGHT

Entities eligible to apply for SIF grants include:

- *Existing grantmaking institutions, or*
 - *Partnerships between an existing grantmaking institution and another grantmaking institution, a State Commission, or the chief executive officer of a unit of general local government*
- i. *Existing grantmaking institutions are organizations in existence at the time of the application where, investing in nonprofit community organizations or programs is an essential (rather than collateral) means of fulfilling their mission and vision. In keeping with this view, grantmaking institutions will generally have the following as part of their core operating functions:*
 - *Conducting open or otherwise competitive programs to award grants to or make investments in a diverse portfolio of nonprofit community organizations;*
 - *Negotiating specific grant requirements with nonprofit community organizations; and*
 - *Overseeing and monitoring the performance of grantees.*

 - ii. *In evaluating your organization's ability to provide fiscal oversight, the Corporation will take into account its review of your organization's capacity. The Corporation will further consider:*
 - *The extent to which your organization, or proposed partnership, has key personnel with the knowledge, skills, abilities, and experience to provide fiscal oversight of subgrantees; and*

- *Whether your organization, or proposed partnership, has specific experience in providing fiscal oversight of subgrantees of Federal funds.*
-

Provide a panel assessment of the application's ORGANIZATIONAL CAPACITY as follows:

- **Write a brief Narrative Assessment;**
 - **List the Significant Strengths and Weaknesses (annotate your comments by referencing the applicable Eligibility or Application Review Criteria); and**
 - **Select a Rating for this section.**
-

Panel Narrative Assessment

We were very impressed by EMCF's extensive collaborations with Bridgespan and MDRC, which provide its grantees with high-level support and advice, addressing both the capacity building and technical support criteria outlined in the SIF NOFA (p. 23). In addition, EMCF's own leadership and staffing resources are efficiently utilized to liaise with the subgrantee portfolio in order to assist them in executing customized strategies for organizational development, capacity building and evaluation (p.8). Finally, the fact that EMCF has created its own Evaluation Advisory Committee further corroborates the importance the Foundation places on self-assessment.

Significant Strengths

Experienced and effective leadership: Program officers are highly skilled and their advisory board is comprised of leading practitioners in the field of youth development (all are identified by name on pages 29-31). (*Org Capacity A.i*)

Adaptability: Grants are closely monitored by teams from Bridgespan, MDRC, and EMCF staff so that they are well equipped to implement mid-course corrections. (*Org Capacity A.i*)

EMCF has the administrative and **financial resources** to fully oversee the sub-grantee selection process and the ongoing management of these programs (p.36). (*Org Capacity A.i*)

Strong relationships within the grant making community as evidenced by EMCF's track record of raising substantial funds (most notably the \$120 million in up-front growth capitals it raised within a year, p. 16). Such co-investment strategic relationships diversify the spectrum of stakeholders in the Foundation's portfolio. (*Org Capacity A.ii*)

EMCF fits the definition of an existing grant making institution. The description of current key personnel and their backgrounds were compelling, especially in regards to Ralph Stefano's background in managing government contractors. (*Org Capacity B.i. and B.ii*)

Significant Weaknesses

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It is unclear from the narrative that EMCF has strong relationships within the communities served in the same way a geographically-focused SIF would. Their community support does not appear to have increased in scope, amount, or diversity. (*Org Capacity A.ii.*)

Select a Rating for ORGANIZATIONAL CAPACITY (double-click in the applicable box and select "checked")

Excellent Strong Satisfactory Weak/Non-responsive

COST EFFECTIVENESS AND BUDGET ADEQUACY (20%)

The **Social Innovation Fund NOFA** states that the following will be considered when reviewing an applicant's Cost-Effectiveness and Budget Adequacy.

A. BUDGET AND PROGRAM DESIGN

In evaluating the cost effectiveness and budget adequacy of your proposed program, the Corporation will consider:

- i. *Whether your program is cost-effective based on:*
 - *The extent to which your program demonstrates diverse, non-Federal resources for program implementation and sustainability;*
 - *The extent to which you are proposing to provide more than the minimum required share of the costs of your program; and*
 - *Whether the reasonable and necessary costs of your program or project are higher because you are proposing to serve areas that are significantly philanthropically underserved.*
- ii. *Whether your budget is adequate to support your program design.*

B. MATCH SOURCES

- i. *At the time of submission of the application, applicants must demonstrate either cash-on-hand or commitments (or a combination thereof) toward meeting 50 percent their first year matching funds, based on the amount of Federal grant funds applied for.*
- ii. *In addition to the match eligibility criteria, the Corporation will evaluate the extent to which you have a combination of cash-on-hand or commitments to meet the full match requirements, and whether your organization will be able to provide financial resources for your SIF program beyond the minimum required match.*

Provide a panel assessment of the application's COST-EFFECTIVENESS AND BUDGET ADEQUACY as follows:

- **Write a brief Narrative Assessment;**
- **List the Significant Strengths and Weaknesses (annotate your comments by referencing the applicable Eligibility or Application Review Criteria); and**
- **Select a Rating for this section.**

Panel Narrative Assessment

The applicant's demonstrated ability to raise substantial funds in partnership with other investors, as well as the percentage of SIF funding it pledges to allocate directly to subgrantees (90%), are evidence of its more than adequate budget effectiveness. In addition, the Foundation's matching commitment exceeds the requirement by over \$3 million (p. 34), although they provide little information as to why their SIF request totals \$10 million.

Significant Strengths

EMCF has committed more than a 1:1 match for year one (p.4). It will provide \$9,000,000 in grants to selected sub-grantees as well as its own resources for fees to The Bridgespan Group estimated to be about \$3 million (p.4). It also will cover the salaries, benefits and organizational needs of its staff assigned to the project (no estimate was provided for these services). (*Budget A.i.*)

EMCF has net assets of \$778 million as of Feb 2010 (p.3), providing a large reserve of funding for scaling and sustainability of its programs beyond the tenure of a SIF grant. (*Budget A.i.*)

EMCF has significant resources to cover the infrastructure needs to manage the sub-grants (p.17), to provide the technical assistance (through Bridgespan and its own staff) and other funders in the wings to provide additional matching support to local sub-grantees (p.34). (*Budget A.ii.*)

While EMCF is still a family foundation with a single "source" of funding, it demonstrates commitment from a wide variety of other funders. (*Budget A.i.*) (*Budget B.*)

Its budget narrative has the grantee covering all administrative costs: federal costs would go primarily to subgrants and \$1 M to evaluation subcontractors, to be matched 1:1 by EMCF (p.4). This far exceeds the minimum required share of the costs of the program. (*Budget A.i.*)

Cash on hand plus commitments from co-investors far exceed 50% of first year funds and demonstrate a commitment to provide more than just financial resources. (*Budget B.i an B.ii.*)

Significant Weaknesses

EMCF has requested funds of \$10 million for year one of the SIF initiative. This is a substantial sum and would represent one of the largest of the grants disbursed by the SIF, should they be selected. They further indicate they will request additional funds for years two and three (at least). While we find their programming and methodology impressive, we are unconvinced that their proposal warrants this sizeable of a funding award. (*Budget A.ii.*)

Their budget provides scant detail about how MDRC and Bridgespan will use its resources (from the SIF grant and EMCF, respectively) other than it will cover planning and development of random assignment and, where possible, evaluations. (*Budget A.ii.*)

Select a Rating for COST-EFFECTIVENESS AND BUDGET ADEQUACY (double-click in the applicable box and select "checked")

Excellent Strong Satisfactory Weak/Non-responsive

OVERALL APPRAISAL

I. Provide a 3 - 5 sentence Overall Appraisal Statement of the application taking into consideration:

- The Narrative Assessments, significant strengths and weaknesses, and Ratings from each category; and
- The weighting of each category (Program Design (45%), Organizational Capacity (35%), Cost-Effectiveness and Budget Adequacy (20%)).

Based on our close review of EMCF's application materials, we are fully convinced that the Foundation would represent a safe investment of SIF funding and would have a measurable impact on economically disadvantaged youth in the four select states identified in the proposal. EMCF surpasses the standards outlined in the NOFA in its organizational capacity, diversified funding portfolio, and its strong ties to other grant makers, management consultancies, and research collaborators. It is patently clear that EMCF's commitment to sound evidence and measurement is part and parcel of the Foundation's culture as well as its program execution. The proposal came up lacking, however, in its attempt to convey the causal impact of its past programs, its rationale for the location of future programs, and its justification of a \$10 million dollar funding request.

II. Select one Band for this application (double-click in the applicable box and select "checked")
Ensure that your selection is supported by your panel's Narrative Assessments, significant strengths and weaknesses, Ratings, and Overall Appraisal Statement. Take into consideration the weighting of each category.

- Band I (Excellent):** A comprehensive and thorough application of excellent merit with very significant strengths and no/minimal significant weaknesses.
- Band II (Strong):** An application that demonstrates overall competence and is worthy of support, where the value of the significant strengths outweigh the identified weaknesses.
- Band III (Satisfactory):** An application with potential, where strengths and weaknesses are approximately equal. However, some fundamental weaknesses have been identified.
- Band IV (Weak/Non-Responsive):** An application with very significant weaknesses and no/minimal significant strengths that have been identified. This option may also include an application that is non-responsive to the published criteria.

Rank

As a panel, Rank this application in relation to the other applications on your panel. Complete this section only after all applications before your panel have been reviewed and consensus has been achieved on each one. The highest rank is "1".

Rank: 1 of 7 total applications on Panel # 10.

CONSENSUS RUBRIC

Please use this Consensus Rubric as guidance when selecting your Ratings or Bands.

BAND I (Excellent) — *A BAND I rating reflects that the application is compelling, consistently excellent in quality, and addresses all requirements; thereby showing the highest potential for success.*

The **Excellent** application consistently:

- ✓ Goes beyond what was requested, showing that the applicant has anticipated issues that may arise.
- ✓ Provides a thorough, detailed response to all of the information requested.
- ✓ Provides a clear and highly compelling description of how the proposed activities will achieve the anticipated results.
- ✓ Provides clear evidence to support all objectives of this section (no assumptions are made).
- ✓ Supports ideas and objectives with comprehensive plans explaining and connecting ideas to objectives.

BAND II (Strong) — *A BAND II rating reflects that the application is solid, good-quality, and has great potential for success.*

The **Strong** application:

- ✓ Provides a response to all of the information requested.
- ✓ Provides a realistic description of how the proposed activities will achieve the anticipated results.
- ✓ Explains most assumptions and reasons.
- ✓ Supports ideas with comprehensive plans, examples, or outlines.

BAND III (Satisfactory) — *A BAND III rating reflects that the application generally meets requirements for a reasonable chance of success, but is neither especially strong nor especially weak.*

The **Satisfactory** application:

- ✓ Covers most of the information requested, with a few exceptions.
- ✓ Is sometimes unclear how the proposed activities will achieve the anticipated results.
- ✓ Makes some assumptions and leaves some reasons unexplained.
- ✓ Supports individual ideas with plans, examples, or outline.

BAND IV (Weak/Non-responsive) — *A weak/non-responsive rating reflects that the application is below standard especially in ability, skill, or quality; indicating that this application will most likely not succeed as described or is not responsive to the application requirements.*

The **Weak/Non-responsive** application:

- ✓ Does not provide one or more key pieces of requested information.
- ✓ Gives an unclear description of how the proposed activities will achieve the anticipated results.
- ✓ Gives many unsupported assumptions and reasons with little or no connection to objectives.
- ✓ Tends to "parrot" back the question, rather than answer and explain it
- ✓ Makes many assumptions and many reasons are not defined.
- ✓ Did not connect the activities to the anticipated results.

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- ✓ Does not address or respond to the requirements/conditions of the NOFA.
- ✓ Proposes activities that are not consistent with the NOFA and application instructions.